



South Central District Health

Keeping your family & community healthy
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National Medicare Bus Tour to Stop in Twin Falls

When the national Medicare Bus Tour pulls into Twin Falls on Friday, Oct. 20, Medicare beneficiaries will have an opportunity to learn more about their benefits and get ready to make informed choices about the new Part D prescription drug coverage enrollment period which begins Nov. 15. The bus will be stationed at South Central District Health on the CSI campus from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. No appointment is necessary to stop by the bus and meet with Medicare counselors.

The bus stop will be coupled with a flu shot clinic at South Central District Health as well as a “Head to Toe” screening for people with diabetes during which they can have their eyesight and feet checked and receive nutritional counseling. Call 737-5900 to make an appointment for a flu shot or the diabetes screening; space is limited for both services. Also on hand to provide Medicare counseling and information about other programs for seniors will be representatives from the Area Office on Aging and Senior Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA).

Building upon the success of the Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Dr. Mark McClellan in September launched the “My Health. My Medicare” fall bus tour campaign. This initiative aims to help beneficiaries during the new Part D enrollment period, which runs from Nov. 15 to Dec. 30, as well as increase awareness of the program’s preventive benefits.

Beneficiaries and those who counsel them will be able to take the “Medicare Check-up” at the bus to compare their current health and prescription drug coverage to other options that may better meet their needs by providing a lower premium, lower out-of-pocket costs, or a more suitable formulary list.

The “Check-up” will also help beneficiaries ensure that they are taking full advantage of available preventive benefits, like flu and pneumonia shots. The goal of the “Check-up” is to help beneficiaries make the most of their benefits to stay healthier so they can spend less on doctors and hospitals, and even less on prescription drugs.

“Getting affordable prescription drugs is important. It’s also critical to underscore the importance of Medicare’s preventive benefits and their role in protecting people from cancer, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and flu and pneumonia,” said Dr. McClellan.

The bus tour is stopping in five Idaho cities – Boise, Caldwell, Pocatello, Idaho Falls, and Twin Falls – to spend a few hours helping beneficiaries understand and evaluate their Medicare health and prescription drug coverage. Medicare hopes that the bus tour will set the stage for the upcoming Part D open enrollment period by educating and motivating Medicare beneficiaries and those who counsel them to take advantage of the full Medicare program, including its online tools found at www.mymedicare.gov and www.medicare.gov.

The past year’s Medicare Part D enrollment efforts have been deemed a success by the Medicare administration: more than 38 million Medicare beneficiaries of the 43 million beneficiaries, or 90 percent, now have some form of drug coverage. More than 3 million prescriptions are being filled every day, while saving people with Medicare drug plans an average of \$1,200 a year. Program costs are 25 percent less than predicted last year. And, according to recent surveys, more than 80 percent of people in plans are satisfied with their coverage.

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